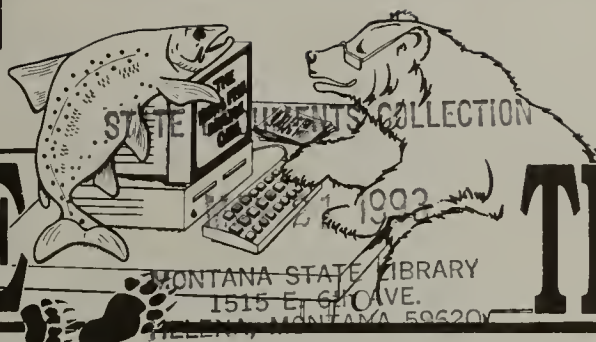


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INSIDE TRACKS



'Big Mack' Makes a Difference

Warden Mack Long and a black bear met at a birthday party at Fireman's Park one day last July.

"Some tourists were camping at the park behind the Libby Chamber of Commerce, and were throwing a birthday party for a little girl who had just turned five," said Long. "The mother was just bringing out the cake and everyone was singing happy birthday when a bear walked into the shelter house. The campers scattered like a flock of quail. The bear was scared, too, and it scooted up a tree. That's when they called me."

The situation quickly became a circus. "By the time I got there and got into position to tranquilize the bear there were about 150 people watching. I got four or five people to help form a safety net with a tarp. Luckily, I estimated the drug dose just right because after I shot the bear, it slowly lost its hold on the tree and fell 40 feet into the waiting tarp. It was like (continued on page 4)

New FWP Commissioner Brings Wildlife Experience To the Job

When Charlie Decker and three friends started the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in 1984, they had no idea how big it would get.

"It's a Cinderella story," said Decker. "Dan Bull, a preacher from Troy, and I were avid elk hunters, and we often talked about what we could do for elk. Bill and Bob Munson joined us in these conversations. Eventually, we decided to model an elk foundation after the one already established for mountain sheep."

The four men put together \$8,000, mailed thousands of flyers, and got 1,500 members the first year. Over 2,000 people attended the first meeting at the Sheraton in Spokane. "We spent \$42,000 putting on the show, and netted \$44,000," said Decker. "We had the pickup running in case we didn't make expenses."

The second annual meeting was held in Denver, and the success shocked Decker. "We took in \$219,000; that's when I knew we were over the hump. We weren't prepared for that kind of success. I was rolling in money piled on a hotel bed, and we had to stuff it in duffel bags to transport it." Since then, the Foundation has grown

each year, and has invested millions in elk habitat.

Decker, a lifetime Libby resident, brings this concern for wildlife and a genuine love of hunting to his job as a Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commissioner.

"I have no preconceived agenda coming into the job, but there are a few things I'd like to work on," he said. "We're not doing enough to encourage youth and females to take part in our hunting tradition. For example, I'd like to see every member of a



FWP COMMISSIONER CHARLIE DECKER shows one of the largest cougars ever taken in Montana. Decker bagged the big cat in 1992. Educating youth about hunting and outdoor traditions is one of Decker's top priorities.

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sportspersons group take a single-parent-child hunting." Decker has donated his own time and money to organize hunting and outdoor skills workshops for youth in the Libby area.

"If I had to describe the philosophy I'll apply in this job, it would be this: first, do what is best for the resource, and second do what's best for the sportspersons—they pay the bill for wildlife conservation."

Volunteer Hunter Ethics Coordinator Named

Bill Archie, a 12-year veteran of the Hunter Education Program, has been named the volunteer Hunter Ethics Coordinator for Region One. Archie will work with FWP to strengthen the importance of ethics and responsibility in the Hunter Education curriculum. He will also help develop programs on youth mentoring and advanced hunter responsibility.

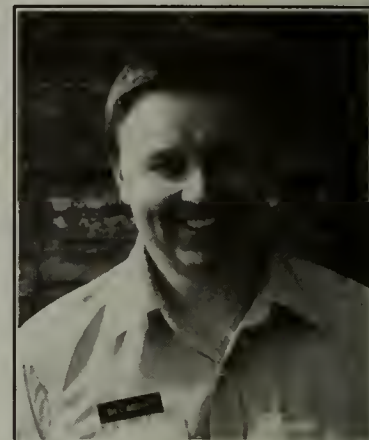
"We have nearly 200 dedicated Hunter and Bowhunter Education instructors in the Region," said Archie.

"Our newly formed ethics committee will develop a process by which the instructors can have direct input into the ethics curricula."

Archie pointed out that it is difficult to teach ethics. "We are dealing with some very personal, private, and important things when we discuss ethics, values, and attitudes. We have to convince students to look at their actions and the actions of their companions through the eyes of a nonhunter."

"I feel strongly about this issue. The poor behavior of one hunter re-

flects on all hunters. When I see a bad example, it embarrasses me personally. Demonstrating good ethics is critical to ensure our hunting privileges and access. It's the right thing to do."



Committee Seeks To Increase Female Participation In Hunter Education Program

Efforts are underway to encourage more female participation in the Region One Hunter Education Program. A committee led by six Hunter Education Instructors is preparing an action plan designed to increase the number of girls and women in Hunter Education classes, and increase the number of female instructors in the program.

The committee is looking at the following options:

- Increase emphasis on female participation when courses are advertised and reported on in the media;
- Emphasize the junior instructor program to girls taking the course and in area schools;
- Develop a mentoring program to make hunting available to more girls;
- Organize a special hunter education course for adult women;
- Examine hunter education course materials and make needed improvements in language and emphasis;
- Provide awareness training to Hunter Education Instructors in the Region;

• Survey past female students to identify ways to improve the course.

According to Hunter Education Instructor Leanna Grubaugh, the Hunter Education Course is a positive experience for females of all ages. "Women should know how to handle

firearms, whether they're going to hunt or not," she said. "The outdoor skills and wildlife information taught in the course is also vital. Recently, I got a hug from a lady who took the course with her son. She felt that she shared something important with her son, and she got a lot out of it."



SIX HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS are leading a committee to prepare an action plan designed to increase the number of girls and women in Hunter Education classes. The instructors are (standing, left to right) Pat Allick, Kris Corrigan, Phyllis Stockwell, and Paulette Kelleher, and (kneeling, left to right) Leanna Grubaugh and Charlotte Adkison.

Chief Instructors Log 115 Years

Montana's Hunter Education Program is one of the best in North America, thanks to the efforts of dedicated volunteers. In Region One, the

four County Chief Instructors have a combined total of 115 years of teaching youth about hunting, gun safety, and outdoor skills.



A CENTURY OF EXPERIENCE is represented by four County Chief Instructors. They are (left to right) Harold Gregg, Willard Stockwell, Frank Sighting and Phil Crismore, and together they have a combined total of 115 years of teaching youth about hunting, gun safety, and outdoor skills.

•Willard Stockwell, Chief Instructor for Flathead County, has taught for 36 years. His black powder presentations highlight the Kalispell area course.

•Harold Greg of Polson is, like Stockwell, a charter member of the program. In his 36th year with the program, he leads the team of instructors in Lake County.

•Frank Sighting has taught hunter education for more than 20 years. Sighting has carried on the high standards set in Lincoln County by his friend and long-time colleague, the late Ray Carlson.

•Phil Crismore also has taught more than 20 years. He recently moved into the Chief Instructor slot in Sanders County.

These men exemplify Montana's hunting heritage, and all hunters owe them a vote of thanks.

License Agents' Corner

License Agents: We'd like to hear from you! In this issue, Jim Welsh (agent #499) begins this regular feature. If you would like to correspond with Jim, he operates Jim's Hardware and DO-IT Center, 6582 Highway 93 South, Whitefish, MT 59937.

If you would like to express some thoughts in this column, let us know at FWP, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901.

We all know that being a license agent for the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has never been a very profitable venture, but it has been a worthwhile one.

My name is Jim Welsh, from

Jim's Hardware and DO-IT Center in Whitefish. Maybe we can use this column to exchange ideas on how we may serve the customer (THE SPORTSMAN), and in turn do our main business a favor. It is imperative that we have a change of heart and take a look at our attitude. I know in our hardware store we get a great deal of those sportsmen who always seem to have an axe to grind about something that FWP has or hasn't done. Surely some of their complaints are legitimate, but just as sure some are not.

To promote a positive attitude among us, I've suggested that we award a prize for the smart IDEA OF THE MONTH. Maybe a coffee

cup from the Director of FWP with a big thank you for your support and his signature on the side? This kind of step allows FWP to show they appreciate what we go through to collect license funds.

I'll start off with an idea we came up with that helped my attitude. Place the sales area for your FWP licenses in the back of your business. It is like a grocery store with milk in the back, designed to draw customers all the way through. Challenge yourself to find an item in your store you need to move or a new item to show off. Idea number 2 is up to you.

As license agents, if we communicate, we can make a difference.

'Big Mack' Makes a Difference

(continued from page 1)

catching a person bailing out of a burning building."

After examining the bear, Long believed it was the same bear that dined at the McDonald's dumpsters the previous four or five nights.

He transported the bear into a remote area of the Kootenai National Forest, and so far it hasn't been seen again.

Long moved 23 bears in 1992, more than in any previous year. "I believe there was a real lack of natural food in the hills, and the bears were drawn to fruit available in the valley," he said. "Most of the bears I saw, though, were in good shape. Evidently they do well on choke cherries, apples and plums."

Another black bear showed up on the playground at Libby Junior High. "When we got there, the bear was up a fir tree," said Long. "We hit him with the tranquilizer dart and he went under, but the tree branches held him up. I had just seen a fire truck in Libby so I called the fire department and asked if we could use the lift.

"But instead of one truck, the whole Fire Department came, and it turned into another public event, although I did appreciate the help. Mike Mehn and I got into the lift, reached the bear, and lowered him by rope into the back of my pickup, so it ended well."

Serving in Libby since 1989, Long has built a strong reputation as a fair enforcer of wildlife laws, and he's developed strong ties with the people of Lincoln County. "You have to work on

developing a respect in people for wildlife law," he said. "If people believe in the law and see the need for it, they obey it. In general, fines don't deter people from violating. If I had a choice to recommend a \$1,000 fine or a loss of hunting and fishing privileges, I'd recommend the loss of privileges."

Long's enforcement philosophy has



WARDEN MACK LONG

developed over a lifetime of experience with the law. He grew up in a Kansas farming community and studied criminal justice and wildlife in college. He planned on going into federal wildlife law enforcement, but began his career by serving eight years as a sheriff's deputy. After that, he became a warden for Kansas Fish and Game. In 1988, he joined the Montana FWP as a

warden in Billings, then transferred northwest Montana.

Long lives in Libby with his wife Connie, sons Chad, 17, and Jake, 13, and daughter Evie, 11. His area includes the Yaak and Bull River country north of Libby.

Youth education is high on Long's priority list. "We are lucky to have such dedicated Hunter Education Instructors in the Libby/Troy area. They understand that many kids have no idea what the outdoors and wildlife are like. I'm concerned that as time goes on and the number of single-parent-kids increases, kids will have less opportunity to experience the outdoor resource. We have to keep in mind that education is the way to preserve the wildlife tradition in Montana."

Long cites false statement of residency as one of the most common wildlife law violations. He works on dozens of such cases each year. "I wouldn't be surprised if false residency claims cost the sportspersons in Montana hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. Nearly every time you work on a residency case, you find one or two more." He cites failure to properly tag big game as another violation he often encounters.

What does the 6' 5", 230-pound president of the Montana Game Wardens Assn. do for fun? "I really enjoy coaching fifth grade girls' basketball (he played center for a Big Eight Conference College) and girls' softball. The kids are a lot of fun, and they remind me what's really important in life."

INSIDE TRACKS is published by Region One

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Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



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